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PROGRAM Senator Barry Goldwater
Commentary STATION WRC Radio

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SUBJECT The Relationship of Intelligence to Foreign Relations

JIM BOHANNON: Yesterday the voice of Senator Goldwater was heard on the House side of Capitol Hill, before the Foreign Affairs Committee.

And, Senator, let's lead off by having you tell us the gist of what you told that committee.

SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER: All right. Well, it was a hearing on the relationship of intelligence to foreign policy or foreign relations. And my comments were directed at the almost perpetual, constant leaks of top classified material from sources both in the White House or near the White House or in the Administration.

I was referring particularly yesterday to the leaks to The New York Times and The Washington Post of material that the intelligence committees had heard classified as over top secret; and within a matter of a week, these matters appeared in both of these newspapers, almost word-for-word. And the statement was made that the material was received from sources close to the National Advisory Committee of the President.

BOHANNON: So, something has to be done. What do you think should be done?

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Well, I don't know, frankly, what can be done. This has been going on, not just this Administration; it's been going on all the years I've been in the Senate. And from older-timers than me, they tell me it's been going on before that.

I think some of it comes under the form of treason.

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Now, I don't blame a reporter who is given a story by the White House or by some high-ranking member of the Administration. I think the reporter has a duty to his country, though, to report where he got that information, so we might then try to use the laws of treason. If those are not going to work, then I think we have to pass special laws to prevent top secret and higher material from being leaked, not just to newspapers, but through the newspapers and the media, to the enemies of this country.

BOHANNON: I can see a situation there that could easily be just as you describe it, if someone, let's say, is selling out secrets on our missile system. But if you had a law, let's say -- if you had had a law that required a reporter to reveal his or her sources on national security grounds, could not everything written by Woodward and Bernstein been dragged into court by the Nixon White House?

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Well, it's not an easy thing. That's what I told you before. We've discussed this and discussed it and discussed it, and we just -- the law, in some ways, would have a tendency to destroy the so-called freedom of the press. I don't think, however, in answer to your question, that it would have done anything to the book that Woodward wrote about the Supreme Court. That was -- there was nothing secret about that. There was nothing of a nation that might be of help to the enemy. Those opinions were personal opinions held by clerks and so forth who worked for the Supreme Court.

BOHANNON: Granted. But during the Watergate probe, for example, when things were being released by Deep Throat, those could have been construed, I suppose, in the hands of someone deeply committed to survival, as being national security items. You can wrap almost anything around national security. And what I was suggesting was that such a law that would require that kind of disclosure of sources could have easily rebounded to have perhaps prevented part of the probe that led to the discovery of all involved in Watergate.

SENATOR GOLDWATER: No, I don't even think that would have. What I'm talking about is material of a highly classified nature that is for the eyes of only a few, material that would be of help to the enemy. And these newspapers and media know what I'm talking about, and they know when they're publishing this material that they're publishing material that is damaging to this country.

BOHANNON: That brings up another problem, too, I think. And I know this from having had a pretty high security clearance in the Army. Sometimes it is pretty much the rule of "when in doubt, classify." And you have virtually everything from today's lunch menu down to last night's list of who dated

whom stamped top secret.

Wouldn't part of the problem be alleviated if, in fact, you did just protect the really important things and stopped being really overly zealous with the top secret stamp?

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Oh, yes. We've been -- we on the Intelligence Committee have been advocating that for a long time. There's a saying up on the Hill that if you want a Senator to read it, stamp it top secret. So it doesn't mean a whole lot. Except when we hear things that we know are classified above top secret, and then they pop up in the magazines, the newspapers and television, that is wrong.

BOHANNON: All right. Thank you, Senator Barry Goldwater.